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	CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY Approved by: <u>Brenda Donald</u> Agency Director Date: <u>November 22, 2013</u>	REVISION HISTORY:
	LATEST REVISION: November 15, 2013	

I. AUTHORITY	<p>The Director of the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA or Agency) adopts this policy to be consistent with the Agency’s mission, and applicable federal and District of Columbia laws and regulations, including provisions of the DC Official Code § 2-1535.01 <i>et seq.</i> and the <i>LaShawn A. v. Gray Implementation and Exit Plan</i> (December 17, 2010); the District of Columbia’s <i>Youth Bullying Prevention Act of 2012</i>, effective September 14, 2013; and DC Law 19-167.</p>
II. APPLICABILITY	<p>All CFSA staff, contracted personnel, resource parents, caregivers, and youth.</p>
III. RATIONALE	<p>Every day, one in five children is the target of bullying (including cyber-bullying) in the United States. Bullying incidents can lead to severe long-term social and emotional problems for those who are bullied. Acts of bullying, harassment and intimidation are an attack on core CFSA values and create an environment incompatible with a child or youth’s right to receive services without fear, intimidation, coercion, or exploitation. In addition, bullying that occurs online is always present as youth are connected via technology nearly 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.</p> <p>Children and youth in CFSA’s care have certain inherent rights, including the right to receive services in a respectful and positive environment that are protected throughout the duration of their experience in the District’s child welfare system. CFSA is committed to ensuring these rights and supporting those who may be the targets of bullying behavior. CFSA provides children and youth with the necessary resources to develop into confident, happy, and self-sustaining adult citizens.</p>
IV. POLICY	<p>It is the policy of CFSA to prohibit any and all forms of bullying (including cyber-bullying), harassment, and intimidation at any CFSA or private agency location, at any Agency-sponsored or related event, in any vehicle used for Agency business, or through the use of any electronic devices owned or leased by the Agency or used for Agency business. Further, CFSA promptly reviews and assesses all incidents of bullying, harassment and intimidation while also providing appropriate remedies for children and youth who are the targets of these actions. Lastly, the Agency strictly prohibits retaliation against anyone who reports bullying, provides information about an act of bullying, or witnesses an act of bullying.</p>

	<p>Any CFSA or private agency employee determined to be the cause of bullying or who retaliates against others who may be the targets of or witnesses to bullying may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.</p> <p>For examples of bullying, bullying behaviors and risk factors, see <i>Attachment A</i>.</p>
V. CONTENTS	<p>A. Definition B. Roles and Responsibilities C. Cyber-bullying D. Prevention Strategies E. Reporting Incidents F. Review and Assessment of Incidents G. Appeals H. Services and Resources for Bullies, Victims, and Witnesses</p>
VI. ATTACHMENTS	<p>A. Examples of Bullying, Bullying Behaviors and At-risk Groups B. Behavior Expectations C. CFSA Bullying Incident Reporting Form</p>
VII. PROCEDURES	<p>Procedure A: Definition</p> <p>The following definition of “bullying” is in accordance with the District of Columbia’s <i>Youth Bullying Prevention Act of 2012</i>, effective September 14, 2013 and cited in the DC Official Code § 2-1535.01(2).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Bullying” means any severe, pervasive, or persistent act or conduct, whether physical, electronic, or verbal that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. May be based on a youth’s actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, intellectual ability, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intrafamily offense, place of residence or business, or any other distinguishing characteristic, or on a youth’s association with a person, or group with any person, with one or more of the actual or perceived foregoing characteristics b. Can be reasonably predicted to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Place the youth in reasonable fear of physical harm to his or her person or property ii. Cause a substantial detrimental effect on the youth’s physical or mental health iii. Substantially interfere with the youth’s academic performance or attendance iv. Substantially interfere with the youth’s ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by CFSA or a contracted private agency.

Procedure B: Roles and Responsibilities

1. The community services program specialist (CSPS) in the Office of Community Partnerships serves as CFSA's coordinator of bullying prevention efforts. The following responsibilities are under the coordinator's purview:
 - a. Serving as the liaison to the citywide bullying prevention director located in the District's Office of Human Rights (OHR)
 - b. Receiving reports of bullying actions and incidents from social workers, staff from CFSA and private agencies, children and youth, caregivers, birth and resource parents (*see Procedure E*)
 - c. Reviewing and assessing reports on bullying incidents and making recommendations for appropriate actions (*see Procedure F*)
 - d. Making referrals for services to children and youth who are targeted or are witnesses, and for those responsible for bullying behaviors
 - e. Collecting and managing bullying incident data for the Agency and reporting data to the citywide prevention director on an annual basis
 - f. Partnering with the Agency's Child Welfare Training Academy (CWTA) to coordinate the design and implementation of training and professional development activities on the issue of bullying prevention for Agency staff
 - g. Coordinating with other District agencies, including the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), charter schools and the Metropolitan Police Department as appropriate, to ensure that youth are not victimized across agencies and that comprehensive service and protection can be provided to bullies and victims

2. The assigned social worker is expected to be respectful, positive, and helpful to children and youth who are in the care of CFSA and to model that behavior at all times. They are also expected to:
 - a. Encourage positive peer relationships and behaviors among children and youth.
 - b. Encourage children and youth to discuss any and all issues with their parent(s) or caregiver and the social worker.
 - c. Ensure open lines of communication with children and youth and be an active listener.
 - d. Provide education, support, and redirection to children and youth who are the targets or witnesses of bullying and youth who are responsible for bullying actions.
 - e. Ensure confidentiality, where possible.
 - f. Gather as much information as possible from the children and youth when informed that a child or youth has been the subject of bullying actions and attempt to resolve the issue.
 - g. Report all information regarding bullying actions to the CSPS.
 - h. Coordinate assessment and follow-up activities with their supervisor and program manager and ensure children and youth receive the necessary support and services.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Document all information on bullying incidents in FACES.NET and ensure adherence to recommended services. <p>3. Caregivers, including resource parents, congregate care providers and other private agency staff, should ensure open communications with the children and youth in their care. In addition caregivers are responsible for the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Assisting the child and youth in identifying bullying actions and behaviors b. When aware that a child or youth in their care has been the subject of bullying actions, immediately (within 24 hours) contacting the child or youth’s social worker by telephone, electronic mail, or text c. Notifying the CSPS by telephone, electronic mail, or text message within 24 hours d. Carefully observing the child or youth’s actions and interactions e. Partnering with the social worker and CSPS to resolve the issue <p>4. Social workers are expected to support, encourage, and guide children and youth towards the following behaviors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To be respectful at all times and to refrain from engaging in bullying behaviors b. To discuss any incidents, feelings, and thoughts with their social worker and resource parent or caregiver c. To report any actions of bullying immediately to his or her social worker, birth or resource parent, or to the youth ombudsman or an Office of Youth Empowerment (OYE) youth ambassador d. To expect that their concerns are taken seriously and that they will be treated fairly and equitably throughout the process e. To expect that their social worker, resource parent, and CSPS will be diligent in their efforts to resolve the situation in a timely manner. <p>5. CFSA’s youth ombudsman and the OYE youth ambassadors play a vital role in being a voice for youth who may be recipients of bullying actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The youth ombudsman works directly with youth in care to ensure that their complaints receive prompt attention and urgent resolution. b. Although a child or youth is encouraged to communicate concerns directly to his or her social worker or social worker’s supervisor, they may also discuss their concerns with the youth ombudsman or youth ambassadors. c. Upon notification of a concern regarding bullying, the youth ombudsman or youth ambassador immediately (within 24 hours) notifies the CSPS who will then notify the child or youth’s social worker. d. In cooperation with CFSA’s ombudsman and CSPS, the youth ombudsman and OYE youth ambassadors may assist in reviewing complaints and concerns of bullying actions.
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	<p>6. Private agencies are essential to ensuring adherence to the contents of this policy by private agency staff and the children and youth in their care. Private agencies will establish related protocols to include but not be limited to the following actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensuring that all staff, children and youth are trained on this policy (<i>Youth Bullying Prevention</i>) and are familiar with the private agencies' established protocols regarding the prevention of bullying among children and youth b. Developing reporting mechanisms for staff, children and youth on incidents of bullying c. Reviewing and assessing incidents d. Developing a process to appeal review and assessment decisions consistent with this policy e. Identifying key point persons responsible for tracking all private agency activities relevant to bullying prevention and reporting data to the CSPA on a monthly basis f. Collaborating with CSPA to provide appropriate training and educational resources needed for children, youth and staff
	<p>Procedure C: Cyber-bullying</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cyber-bullying is bullying that takes place through technology, including but not limited to computers, social media, cell phones, and gaming devices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of cyber-bullying include unkind or hurtful text messages or emails, unkind or hurtful rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles. 2. Social workers, resource parents and caregivers should discuss with children and youth the importance of being thoughtful about what they post or what they say, reminding them that once something is posted, it is out of their control whether someone else will forward it.
	<p>Procedure D: Prevention Strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CSPA is committed to providing a safe environment and positive atmosphere, emphasizing a culture of respect and safety. CSPA and private agency staff are strongly encouraged to maintain a positive and respectful environment. 2. Agency social workers and other staff in regular contact with children and youth shall focus on the following strengths when interacting with children and youth: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Teaching respect for all and creating an inclusive environment b. Incorporating bullying prevention messages in all phases of engagement with youth c. Educating children and youth on the dynamics of bullying and its potential harm d. Providing ways for children and youth to become leaders

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	<p>e. Helping children and youth develop skills such as conflict resolution and the positive social-emotional skills of empathy and resilience</p> <p>3. Social workers shall encourage children and youth to avoid communicating anything that could hurt or embarrass themselves or others and to think critically about others who might actually see the information and pictures they post online.</p> <p>4. The CSPA collaborates with CWTA and the citywide prevention director to provide the following training and professional development opportunities for social workers, other staff, resource parents and caregivers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How to respond to and report an incident of bullying b. How to educate children and youth to recognize and prevent bullying c. How to engage with each other as well as with children and youth to build an Agency-wide atmosphere of respect d. How to provide immediate support for victims and witnesses during or after an incident e. Age and developmentally-appropriate strategies for identifying, preventing, and responding constructively to incidents of bullying f. Internet safety and cyber-bullying issues
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	<p>Procedure E: Reporting Incidents</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CFSA expects all Agency and private agency staff, resource parents, and caregivers to report incidents of bullying or retaliation they witness or are made aware of to the CSPA and the assigned social worker. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the individuals cited above are expected to encourage children and youth to report to their social worker or any other adult staff member any incidents they experience or witness. 2. Reports of bullying incidents involving children and youth in the care of CFSA or of any CFSA-contracted provider shall be made to the CSPA by electronic mail or telephone within 24 hours following the incident. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports may also be made directly to the CSPA anonymously. No action will be based solely on an anonymous report. 3. The CSPA creates a written report of the bullying incident and submits reports to the citywide prevention director. All oral reports received as part of this process will be transcribed by the CSPA into writing and included in CFSA’s bullying database. 4. The CSPA must document all information provided and immediately notify the youth’s assigned social worker. 5. The CSPA ensures that there are reporting materials available and that information about reporting is communicated to children and youth in an age-appropriate manner. 6. The social worker encourages further discussion with the children and youth and birth or resource parents during home visits.
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	<p>7. Information on how to report incidents of bullying is included as appropriate in CFSA mailings to children and youth, birth and resource parents.</p>
	<p>Procedure F: Review and Assessment of Incidents</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prior to the review and assessment of an incident, the social worker must take appropriate action to ensure the safety of the alleged victim referenced in a reported bullying incident. 2. A review and assessment of an incident is initiated no more than 1 day after the CSPA receives a report of a bullying incident and concludes no later than 30 days after the receipt of such a report. 3. As part of the investigation, the CSPA along with the social worker may interview any involved or relevant parties including alleged victims, bullies, witnesses, staff, resource parents or caregivers. 4. The CSPA and social worker ensure confidentiality as much as possible to relevant parties as part of the review and assessment. 5. The CSPA and social worker inform all relevant parties that retaliation for reporting acts of bullying is prohibited. 6. Consequences for a child or youth determined to be the cause of bullying incidents or who retaliate against others who may be the targets of or witnesses to bullying may include but are not limited to the following corrective actions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mandatory hours of training and education on the effects of bullying behavior and the prevention of future actions b. Peer mediation c. Other actions as identified or recommended by any of the involved parties 7. Written records of the review and assessment process are maintained and may be included in the prevention database to generate a more accurate picture of bullying behaviors affecting children or youth involved with CFSA. Where necessary, provisions are made to include the advice of legal counsel. 8. If the CSPA determines that additional support is needed to conduct a thorough and equitable review and assessment, they may consult with the assigned social worker and his or her supervisor as well as the citywide prevention director for assistance. 9. Once an investigation is concluded, further steps are taken as needed to assure the continued safety of the victim from additional incidents of bullying or retaliation.

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	<p>Procedure G: Appeals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Any party dissatisfied by the outcome of a review and assessment of a bullying incident may appeal the determination to the deputy director for program operations or the private agency program director. 2. This appeal should be submitted to the deputy director or program director no later than 30 days after the initial determination. 3. Upon receipt of an appeal, the deputy director or program director must conduct a secondary review and assessment within 30 days of the receipt of an appeal. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This 30 days may be extended by up to an additional 15 days if the deputy director or program director sets forth in writing the reasons why more time is needed to conduct a review and assessment. 4. Upon the receipt of an appeal, the deputy director or program director must inform the appellant that he or she has the right to seek additional redress under the DC Human Rights Act.
	<p>Procedure H: Services and Resources for Bullies, Victims, and Witnesses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The CSPS, in collaboration with the assigned social worker, refers any CFSA or contracted private agency youth involved in an incident of bullying to the appropriate services, as necessary, either as a bully, victim, or witness within 30 days of the incident report. 2. Services provided to the children and youth identified as the perpetrator of a bullying incident are designed to correct the thinking patterns and behaviors that led to the incident, turning a bullying incident into a teachable moment. 3. Services provided to the victim and witnesses are designed to restore the child or youths' sense of safety and to empower them to address bullying incidents in a constructive and non-violent manner. 4. Services are designed to help children and youth build necessary life-long skills and will be tailored to the child or youth based on the following needs: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Life skill competencies b. Extracurricular and academic strengths and weaknesses c. Available peer and home support networks d. Mental and behavioral health concerns e. Personal traits f. Desires of the child or youth

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Examples of Bullying, Bullying Behaviors and Risk Factors

Risk Factors

1. Generally, children and youth who are bullied have one or more of the following risk factors:
 - a. They are perceived as different from their peers, such as being overweight or underweight, wearing glasses or different clothing, being new to a school, or being unable to afford what kids consider “cool”
 - b. They are perceived as weak or unable to defend themselves
 - c. They are depressed, anxious, or have low self esteem
 - d. They are less popular than others and have few friends
 - e. They do not get along well with others
 - f. They are seen as annoying or provoking, or antagonize others for attention
2. Not all bullying is based upon a child or youth’s identifiable characteristics. The following additional risk factors are included for being bullied:
 - a. Having few friends and being disconnected from peers
 - b. Being depressed or having low self-esteem, which may be in part related to being bullied
 - c. Being seen as lacking social skills or as prone to provoking others
3. There are two types of children and youth who are more likely to bully
 - a. Some are well-connected to their peers, have social power, are overly concerned about their popularity, and like to dominate or be in charge of others
 - b. Others are more isolated from their peers and may be depressed or anxious, have low self-esteem, be less involved in school, be easily pressured by peers, or not identify with the emotions or feelings of others
4. In addition to the factors cited in #3 above, there are other characteristics of children and youth who are more likely to bully others. They do not need to be stronger or bigger than those they bully. The power imbalance can come from a number of sources—popularity, strength, cognitive ability—and children who bully may have more than one of the following characteristics:
 - a. Aggressive or easily frustrated
 - b. Less parental involvement or have issues at home
 - c. Think badly of others
 - d. Difficulty following rules
 - e. View violence in a positive way
 - f. Have friends who bully others

Characteristics

Youth engage in bullying behaviors for many reasons. There is no one single profile of a youth who bullies. Some youth bully in reaction to underlying problems, such as problems at home or mental health problems. These youth may have the following characteristics or attributes:

1. Easily angered
2. Irritable

3. Aggressive
4. Little parental involvement or lack of an adult mentor
5. Difficulty following rules

Some youth bully as a way to gain and maintain social status. These youth may have the following characteristics or attributes:

1. Friends who are aggressive or bully
2. Overly concerned with status or popularity
3. Overly concerned with establishing and enforcing social norms.

Bullying vs. Teasing

Bullying is different from fighting or teasing in the following ways:

1. A bully has power over another
2. Bullies try to control others by scaring them
3. Being picked on over and over can make one feel victimized
4. Bullying usually happens when other youth are watching.

Bullying Prevention

Bullying prevention means taking action and setting up the environment and resources so that bullying is stopped before it starts. It focuses both on preventing children and youth from engaging in bullying behavior, as well as helping those who may be targeted.

Behavior Expectations

CFSA and private agency social workers are expected to be respectful, positive, and helpful to children and youth who are in the care of CFSA and to model these behaviors at all times. They are expected to engage the children and youth, encouraging and guiding them towards positive peer relationships and behaviors at all times. As stated in CFSA's *Bill of Rights for Youth in Care* administrative issuance, children and youth in care have the right to "be respected, heard, and cherished during my time in foster care. I also have the responsibility to listen to, hear, and respect the members of my support team".

Children and youth are also expected to:

1. Treat everyone with respect
2. Respect the property of others, including other children and youth, resource parents, and staff of the Agency or private provider
3. Respond appropriately to instructions from Agency and private provider staff.

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Child and Family Services Agency**



CFSA Bullying Incident Reporting Form

Today's Date and Time: _____

Personal Information

1. Name of person completing the report _____
Note: Youth who may be reporting an alleged Bullying Incident they have witnessed have the option of remaining anonymous.

2. You are the (please check one of the following):
 - Victim of this behavior
 - Witness to an incident
 - Other

3. You are the (please check one of the following):
 - Youth
 - Caregiver
 - CFSA Staff member (please specify title and administration): _____
 - Private agency staff (please specify agency and title): _____
 - OYE Ambassador
 - CFSA Youth Ombudsman
 - Other (please specify): _____

4. Please provide your contact information:
 - a. Office Phone: _____
 - b. Cell Phone: _____
 - c. Email: _____

5. Has this incident been reported to another agency?
 - a. Yes No I don't know
 - b. If yes please provide the name of the agency and contact person:

Incident Information

Name(s) of victim: _____

Name(s) of alleged bully: _____

Date and Time of Actual Incident

Date: ____/____/____

Time: _____ AM/PM

Date and Time Incident was Reported to You

Date: ____/____/____

Time: _____ AM/PM

Type of Aggression

Please check all that apply to this incident:

- Verbal
- Physical
- Written
- Cyber Bullying
- Relational
- Other (please specify): _____

Location of the Incident

Please check all that apply to this incident:

- CFSA event
- CFSA office
- Foster home
- School
- Group home
- Private agency
- On the way to school
- On the way to a CFSA event
- Other location (please specify): _____
- Off-campus location (cyber bullying) _____

Witnesses (Please list people who have information about the incident):

Name: _____ Youth: Staff: Other, specify: _____

Name: _____ Youth: Staff: Other, specify: _____

Name: _____ Youth: Staff: Other, specify: _____

Description of Incident

Current Intervention

- No assistance is required incident is being addressed by (please check all that apply):
 - Case management
 - Mental health services
 - School staff
 - Coaching/ mentoring
 - Social worker’s supervision with supervisor
 - Other agency provider (please specify): _____
 - Other (please specify): _____
- Yes, other assistance is required please contact me to discuss further at: _____